

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 00154 100852Z

13-12

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DOTE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 SAM-01

/084 W

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P R 091750Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4175

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION USEC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJ: MADRID SUBWAY STRIKE CONTINUES - OTHER STRIKE ACTIVITY

INCREASING

REF: MADRID 0076

BEGIN SUMMARY. SUBWAY STRIKE IS STILL NOT SETTLED AND SPANISH ARMY PERSONNEL ARE MOVING THE TRAINS. WHILE SUBWAY STRIKE COULD BE SETTLED SHORTLY, SUBWAY STRIKE HAS ACTED AS CATALYST FOR OTHER STRIKE ACTIVITY, AND GENERAL STRIKE ATTEMPTS HAVE REPORTEDLY
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PAGE 02 MADRID 00154 100852Z

BEEN CONVOKED FOR NEXT WEEK. END SUMMARY.

1. MADRID SUBWAY STRIKE HAS ENTERED ITS FIFTH DAY. GOVT JAN 7 PUT ONE OF FIVE MADRID SUBWAY LINES BACK INTO SERVICE BY USING MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM SPANISH ARMY TRANSPORTATION REGIMENT, AND YESTERDAY AND TODAY OPENED UP TWO MORE SUBWAY LINES, ALTHOUGH COMMUTER CHAOS IS STILL CONSIDERABLE.

2. SITUATION, HOWEVER, IS STILL AT AN IMPASSE, THOUGH IT COULD BE SETTLED OVER THE WEEKEND. PAST TWO DAYS HAVE BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY RENEWED CHURCH SIT-INS OF STRIKING SUBWAY WORKERS, INCLUDING ONE IN WHICH 3,000 SUBWAY WORKERS CROWDED INTO A MADRID CHURCH JAN 8. GOVT, LARGELY THROUGH HIGH-LEVEL SSO OFFICIALS, HAS ALSO CONTINUED TO MEET REPS OF STRIKERS AND COMPANY IN EFFORTS TO MEDIATE.

3. ALTHOUGH SUBWAY STRIKE BASED ON REAL ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES, IT HAS BECOME POLITICIZED. ACCORDING LABOR SOURCES, STRIKE WAS LARGELY ORGANIZED BY DEMOCRATIC CATHOLIC-ORIENTED USO TRADE UNION AS WELL AS BY CATHOLIC BUT EXTREMIST ORT (PRINCIPAL NON-PCE COMPONENT OF WORKERS COMMISSIONS). ACCORDING SAME SOURCES, COMMUNIST PARTY (PCE) ELEMENTS OF WORKERS COMMISSIONS DID NOT PARTICIPATE INITIALLY IN SUBWAY STRIKE, ALTHOUGH AFTER SUBWAY STRIKE HAD DEMONSTRATED ITS SUCCESS THEN OTHER CLANDESTINE GROUPS, INCLUDING PCE AND SOCIALIST UGT, JOINED IN.

4. MOST IMPORTANT, SUBWAY STRIKE HAS ACTED AS SOMEWHAT OF CATALYST FOR WORKERS IN OTHER SECTORS. THUS YESTERDAY AND TODAY THERE WERE REPORTEDLY OVER 20,000 MADRID METAL WORKERS ON STRIKE, ALTHOUGH MORE THAN HALF BELONGED TO STANDARD ELECTRICA-ITT, WHICH HAS BEEN ON STRIKE MORE THAN A MONTH. STRIKES HAVE RECOMMENCED IN MADRID INDUSTRIAL AREA OF GETAFE, WHERE 2,600 WORKERS OF FOUR DIFFERENT STRUCK FIRMS STAGED TWO CHURCH SIT-INS YESTERDAY, BUT FINALLY ABANDONED CHURCHES PEACEABLY UNDER POLICE PRESSURE. THERE WERE ALSO A COUPLE OF EFFORTS AT STREET MANIFESTATIONS, ONE IN CENTRAL MADRID, BY SMALL GROUPS OF STRIKERS WHICH WERE BROKEN UP BY POLICE USING TEAR GAS. INTERMITTENT STRIKES IN VARIOUS MADRID BANKS, AGAIN PRIMARILY RELATED TO NEW CONTRACT RENEGOTIATIONS, HAVE ALSO RECOMMENCED. STRIKES ALSO HAVE BEGUN AGAIN IN MADRID CONSTRUCTION SECTOR OVER CONTRACT TERMS. AN UNHEARD-OF EVENT OCCURRED JAN 8, WHEN

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PAGE 03 MADRID 00154 100852Z

PRESIDENT OF SSO NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS SYNDICATE (A CORTES MEMBER), WHOM THE WORKERS HAD LONG CONSIDERED A REGIME STOOGE, LED A GROUP OF 50 STRIKING CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN A SIT-IN INSIDE SSO HEADQUARTERS.

4. COMMENT. EVEN THOUGH SUBWAY STRIKE MAY BE SETTLED WITHIN NEXT DAY OR TWO, NEXT WEEK IS LIKELY TO WITNESS EXTENSIVE STRIKE ACTIVITY, AND PCE AND SOME OTHER LABOR GROUPS ARE ALREADY

REPORTEDLY ISSUING APPEALS FOR GENERAL STRIKE ATTEMPTS NEXT WEEK (VARIOUSLY GIVEN FOR JAN 12 OR LATE THAT WEEK). ALTHOUGH ATTEMPT AT POLITICAL GENERAL STRIKE WILL, AS IN THE PAST, PROBABLY FAIL, ORGANIZERS WILL CLAIM SUCCESS BECAUSE OF NUMBERS OUT ON STRIKE OVER CONTRACT GRIEVANCES. WAVE OF STRIKES WILL TEST GOVT ON SEVERAL FRONTS, PARTICULARLY RE ATTITUDE TOWARDS LABOR, PUBLIC ORDER, AND IT RECENTLY ANNOUNCED ECONOMIC AUSTERITY MEASURES. ADDITIONALYY, ABRUPT CHANGE IN ATTITUDE BY SSO NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION WORKER LEADER MAY PRESAGE EFFORTS BY OTHER SSO LEADERS TO NOW SEEK POPULARITY AMONG WORKERS AND LABOR OPPOSITION GROUPS, DESPITE FACT THEY HAVE SERVED REGIME AND SSO IN SUPPRESSING LABOR DISCONTENT IN PAST.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR STRIKES, URBAN TRANSPORTATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JAN 1976
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID00154
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760009-1021
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760169/aaaacjge.tel
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MADRID 76
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 MAR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <15 APR 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MADRID SUBWAY STRIKE CONTINUES - OTHER STRIKE ACTIVITY INCREASING
TAGS: ELAB, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006